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POLISH PARTY HISTORIAN REVIEWS  
STALIN'S INFLUENCE ON POLISH COMMUNIST PARTY ORGANIZATIONS

The following information is taken from one of the commentaries made by dignitaries of the PZPR (United Polish Workers' Party) at the Eighth Plenum of its Central Committee, held 28 March 1953. Each of the commentaries, given in abridge form in Nowe Drogi, is an amplification of Bierut's keynote address.

Tadeusz Danisewski, director of the Party History Division, points in the present commentary to previous party successes and failure based on adherence to or deviation from the USSR line.

Stalin had close ties with the Polish labor movement. In his earliest works, he expressed his deep sympathy for the enslaved Polish nation and for the Polish people's struggle for national and social freedom. The heroic actions of the proletariat in the Dabrowa Basin, in Zyrardow, and in other Polish towns were received sympathetically throughout Tsardom and were reflected in Stalin's pronouncements in the illegal press of the RSDRP (Russian Social-Democratic Labor Party) group in the Caucasus. At the start of the 1905 Revolution, Stalin characterized the October strike movement which paralyzed not only the center of the state but all of Russia by writing "...all Poland and...all of the Caucasus have arisen and are threatening the despot."

Like Lenin, Stalin emphatically pointed out that "the unity of all workers, regardless of nationality, is necessary for victory over Tsardom," and that solidarity with the Russian proletariat on the part of the struggling masses of all nations oppressed by Tsardom, including Poland, is an indispensable precursor of their complete independence. Stalin addressed the following words to the Polish electorate during the elections to the Duma: "You are struggling for the right of free national development; remember that national freedom is impossible without universal freedom."

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Stalin rated the SDKPiL (Social Democracy of the Kingdom of Poland and Lithuania) very highly for its international position, despite its ideological immaturity and the erroneous viewpoints which he criticized. In his "Notes of a Delegate to the London Congress of the RSDRP," Stalin noted with satisfaction that all the Polish delegates of the SDKPiL decisively backed the Bolsheviks. In another article on this period, Stalin stated that, in opposition to the Mensheviks, "the industrial centers for the greater part support the Bolsheviks. Bolshevik policy is accepted with confidence in Petersburg, Moscow, the central industrial region, Poland, the Baltic country, and the Urals."

The following fact illustrates the growing brotherhood of arms between the Polish and Russian proletariat and the steadfast bond which united the SDKPiL with the party of Lenin and Stalin despite all their differences. In protest at the bloody massacre on the Lena, which evoked a great wave of indignation and initiated a period of revolutionary revival, Stalin wrote in the Petersburg *Zvezda* in April 1912: "The salvos on the Lena have broken the silent ice and the river of the people's movement has surged forth." Soon thereafter, the SDKPiL's *Czerwony Sztandar* (Red Banner), as if in reply to Stalin, stated: "The class unity of Polish workers and Russian workers, the unity of their revolutionary goals, and the unity of their actions have again become plain and evident. The salvos of the Lena have struck the Polish and Russian proletariat as one organism out of which a common cry of pain and protest has come, as if common blood flowed in the veins of Polish and Russian workers and as if they were vitalized by one common heart."

We are proud that the creators of the Bolshevik party of Lenin and Stalin, on the eve of World War I, fashioned their strategy and tactics on Polish soil. "Marxism and the Question of Nationalism," written by Stalin in this period, had a special meaning for the Polish liberation movement. The ideas included in this work, which was a declaration of the Bolshevik program on the national question, were realized, after the victorious October Revolution, in Stalin's "Declaration of the Rights of the Peoples of Russia," which proclaimed the right of free national self-determination, even to the point of secession and the creation of independent states.

The vista of national and social liberation was opened to the Polish nation. Stalin stated in 1919: "The world has been split decisively and irrevocably into two camps: imperialism and socialism.... Estonia and Lithuania, the Ukraine and Crimea, Turkestan and Siberia, Poland and the Caucasus, and even Russia herself are not goals in themselves, but only an arena in the mortal battle between imperialism, which tries to strengthen the yoke of slavery, and socialism, which is struggling for liberation from slavery."

The KPP (Communist Party of Poland) was the sole force in Poland fighting for socialism, against imperialism, and for friendship of Poland with the USSR, and against economic and political dependence of Poland on the imperialist world. The KPP was the sole force struggling for true independence, because it was based on the authority of the people and on friendship with the Russian Revolution and progressive revolutionary forces throughout the world. But the KPP could not fulfill its historic mission in the early years of its existence because it was burdened down by the legacy of erroneous Luxemburgist concepts and opportunistic theories inherited from the PPS (Polish Socialist Party)-Left. It was only after the sad experience of defeats at the hands of the class enemy on one hand and with the example of the young Soviet state which showed the correctness in the practical application of Bolshevik principles on the other hand, and finally the unceasing help from the Comintern and its leading section, the VKP(b) (All-Union Communist Party (Bolshevik)), that the KPP gradually assimilated Marxism-Leninism.

In the words of Comrade Bierut: "The K.P., from the time of its Second Congress in 1923, became a party which introduced Leninism into the history of the Polish worker movement."

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The process of assimilating and applying Marxist-Leninist principles to conditions in Poland by the KPP was long, difficult, and painful. The matter was complicated even more by the fact that enemy agents operated within the KPP, sometimes within its directing organs. These agents obstructed the Bolshevikization of the party by employing crafty methods, sectarian tactics, and loud revolutionary phraseology.

For many years after the Second Congress, party authorities continued to make serious errors either of an obviously rightist character or of an ultra-leftist character. Every error of this kind victimized the party and the working class. Paraphrasing Lenin's statement that "Russia attained Marxism through suffering," we can say that Poland, too, purchased the victory of Marxism-Leninism by great sacrifices and sufferings.

Stalin personally gave all-round, valuable aid to help the KPP overcome its errors on the path to Marxism-Leninism. At the end of 1923 and the beginning of 1924, the KPP authorities committed a series of opportunistic errors and supported the rightists in other sections of the Comintern, the Fifth Congress of the Comintern created a Polish commission to help the party meet the crisis. The leader of the Russian delegation and also the chairman of this commission, which included the most distinguished representatives of affiliated parties, was Stalin.

A KPP brochure on the commission stated: "The high point of the commission proceedings was Stalin's talk. Clearly, emphatically, and thoroughly he presented the essence of the conflict between the leaders of the Polish right and the Comintern and offered a solution."

In this talk, Stalin characterized the liberal attitude toward opportunistic deviations as a remnant of social democratism. To this day, we have not rooted this remnant out of our daily lives completely; the following is one example of this: Every important publication in the USSR is subject to critical analysis by the press for faults and merits. It is unimportant whether the criticism pleases the author or not. Our reviews are more of a reporting and informational character, and are handled as a matter of courtesy. For example, the publications of the Party History Division for some reason do not draw critical remarks in the party press, although these would only be a help in our work.

Again in July 1925, Stalin gave advice and assistance to the KPP, which this time was going through an ultraleftist crisis. At a meeting of the reconstituted Polish commission, Stalin exposed the ultraleftist phraseology of the group gathered around Donski and stigmatized its reactionary attacks against the Comintern.

Stalin was the ingenious teacher and educator of Polish Communists. He taught them how to avoid various deviations from the general Leninist line, how to realize the Bolshevik principle of keeping pace with the masses, how to lead the masses, how not to tag along behind reactionary lines and prejudices but still not to go too far ahead and thus cut themselves off from the masses.

In criticizing the "May blunder" of the KPP, Stalin gave a penetrating analysis of the internal situation of Poland at that time: "Poland, at the present time, constitutes a tangled web of basic contradictions which in their eventual development must inevitably lead Poland into an immediate revolutionary situation. These contradictions appear in three basic problems: the worker, the peasant, and nationalism." Stalin taught the KPP that it must stand at the head of the entire movement as the leader of all the oppressed and exploited, and that it must direct all sources of revolutionary energy in the country into one channel.

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In discussing the Comintern program at the Central Committee of the VKP(b) in 1928, Comrade Stalin placed Poland in the category of countries with moderately developed capitalism and remnants of feudalism and described it as a country with a special agrarian question. The petty bourgeoisie, especially the peasantry, undoubtedly would have great influence in the event of a revolution and would require certain temporary measures, such as the dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry, on the road to the dictatorship of the Proletariat. It seems that the KPP did not use all the suggestions of this important directive of Stalin, that it did not fully appreciate the extent of the feudal remnants in Poland, especially the peasants, but expected to follow a straight line toward the dictatorship of the proletariat.

A letter of Comrade Stalin entitled "On Certain Problems of the History of Bolshevism," published by the periodical Proletarskaya Revolyutsiya, was of great importance for the ideological development of the KPP and the assimilation of Marxism-Leninism. In this letter, Stalin made a severe, but just, evaluation of the leftist social democrats in Germany, especially of the Luxemburgists, whose ideology coincided somewhat with Trotsky's. Although an overwhelming majority of SDKPIL activists took the Leninist position, there were also many units which had held on tenaciously to old, erroneous concepts and had sunk into the morass of Trotskyism.

Stalin's letter bore fruit. The Central Committee of the KPP passed two far-reaching resolutions in which it criticized the inheritance of erroneous concepts of the SDKPIL and the PPS-Left. Nevertheless, it did not discount the services of these parties; especially the great, immortal services of the SDKPIL in its international attitude toward the maturing and later victorious Russian Revolution, as the sole path leading to the social and national liberation of Poland.

Stalin became the rallying point for the Polish Communist movement in these years. The Central Committee of the KPP sent a letter of greeting to Stalin on his 50th birthday calling him "the staunch fighter for the purity of the Leninist line." All of Stalin's basic works and statements were cited and widely discussed in the Polish illegal Communist press and where possible in the legal press. The central organ of the KPP, Czerwony Sztandar, commenting on the 17th Congress of the VKP(b), published an article called "Stalin Must Be Our Guide." With the threat of Hitlerite aggression, the Fourth Plenum of the KPP's Central Committee published a memorial declaration. This declaration stated that the Polish Communists, as the inheritors of the finest democratic and liberating traditions of the Polish people, were uniting the problem of Polish national independence indissolubly with the overthrow of the fascist yoke and the liberation of subjugated peoples under Polish imperialism. As the KPP assimilated the teachings of Lenin and Stalin, it matured in the role of the nation's leader.

In a letter to Denian Biedny, Stalin wrote of his conversations with Polish, German, and French workers: "They are excellent revolutionary material. Everything indicates that in the West a real revolutionary hatred of the bourgeois system is growing. It was with joy that I listened to their simple but forceful words expressing the desire to start a revolution on the Russian model at home. One more characteristic of these workers struck me: their strong, sincere, and almost motherly love of our country and their boundless faith in the righteousness of our party's policies, capabilities, and power."

During the occupation, the Polish Workers' Party followed the Stalinist path and raised high the banner of patriotism and internationalism. This path was and is followed also by the United Polish Workers' Party and is the best guarantee of our ultimate victory.

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